

August 15, 2002

PLASTICS WHITE PAPER

Volume I Executive Summary

*Optimizing
Plastics Use,
Recycling, and
Disposal in
California*

**DRAFT DOCUMENT
For Discussion Purposes Only
Do Not Cite or Quote**

August 15, 2002

PLASTICS WHITE PAPER

Volume I Executive Summary

*Optimizing Plastics Use, Recycling,
and Disposal in California*

Prepared for:



California Integrated
Waste Management Board



California Department
of Conservation

Prepared by:

NewPoint Group®
Management Consultants

2555 Third Street, Suite 215
Sacramento, California 95818
916.442.0189

This report printed
on recycled paper





Volume 1. Executive Summary

Why a Plastics White Paper?
Why are California Plastic Policies Not Working?
What Should the State Do About Plastics?

Volume 2. Polystyrene Plastics Report

SB 1127 Polystyrene Status Report

Volume 3. Background of White Paper and Workshop

White Paper Background and Workshop Support Materials, 2002
Workshop Presentation Slides, June 24 and 25, 2002

Volume 4. Industry Input to Plastics White Paper and Workshop

Industry Stakeholder Responses of July 12, 2002
Industry Stakeholder Responses of March 15, 2002
Unsolicited Industry Technology Responses, Various dates, 2002
Industry Framing Session Notes, July through December, 2001





Why a Plastics White Paper?

- 1 Plastics Use is Proliferating and for Good Reasons
- 5 Plastics Disposal is Growing Fast and is Voluminous
- 6 Plastics Recycling is Lagging and it is Expensive
- 11 Plastic Markets are Dynamic, Limited, and Volatile
- 12 Plastics Use Has Significant Unintended Consequences We Have Not Fully Recognized
- 14 Plastics Resource Use is Not Being Effectively Managed
- 16 Plastics Present a Timely Public Policy Challenge

Why are California Plastic Policies Not Working?

- 17 Plastics Have Not Been Effectively Incorporated into California's Integrated Waste Management Program (AB 939)
- 20 The Rigid Plastic Packaging Container Law (SB 235) in California is Ineffective
- 22 The Plastics Trash Bag Law (SB 951) in California is Obsolete
- 23 Plastics Recycling Struggles under California's Updated Bottle Bill (AB 2020)
- 28 Plastic Issues Have Not Been Adequately Addressed in California

What Should the State Do About Plastics?

- 31 A Fresh Approach is Needed for Managing Plastics in the State
- 33 Certain State Plastic Policy Issues Need to Be Explicitly Considered Upfront
- 39 Modifications to Existing State Plastic Laws Need to Be Made
- 42 There are Four Key Components to a Long-Term Plastics Solution for the State
- 47 A Structured Collaborative Process Needs to Begin Now to Develop Shared-Responsibility for Plastics in the State
- 49 The State Needs Smart Plastic Policies

53 Endnotes

55 About the Authors

List of Exhibits and Figures

iv

Why a Plastics White Paper?

- 2 U.S. Plastic Resin Sales Continue to Grow
- 2 U.S. Plastic Resins are Used in a Wide Range of Beneficial Applications
- 3 Plastics Have Tremendous Source Reduction Properties
- 3 Plastics are a Low Density Material, Even as Compared to Light Weight Aluminum
- 5 The Long-Term Gap Between U.S. Plastics Generation and Recovery is Widening
- 5 Plastics are Ranked 5th by Weight, but 2nd by Volume, in California's Landfills (1999)
- 6 Film is the Largest Plastics Category (by Weight) in California's Landfills (1998)
- 8 Plastic Beverage Containers (PET) Generally Have the Lowest Recycling Rates of All California beverage Containers
- 9 More California Plastic Beverage Containers are Disposed versus Recycled, and more so than Other Material Types (2000)
- 10 AB 2020 Supports Plastics Recycling in California and Without AB 2020 Payments, the Costs of Plastics Recycling are much Higher than the Scrap Values of Most Plastics
- 14 Plastics Litter is Predominant in California's Storm Drain Runoff
- 16 Optimizing Plastics Use, Recycling, and Disposal Presents a Timely California Public Policy Challenge

Why are our California Plastic Policies Not Working?

- 21 The California RPPC Recycling Rate Has Declined While Total RPPC Tons Recycled Have Increased
- 24 The Proportion of California PET Plastic Beverage Containers Recycled of Total AB 2020 Containers Recycled Has Risen
- 27 California Recycling Rates for Non-PET and Non-HDPE Plastic Beverage Containers was Tiny in 2001

What Should the State Do About Plastics?

- 32 Current State Plastics Model
- 32 Future State Plastics Model
- 42 The Four Key Components to California's Long-Term Plastics Solution
- 50 Summary of Plastic Policy Options

Why a Plastics White Paper?

- 4 Life Cycle Material Analysis can be an Informative Tool but it Should Not Be Used for Policy Decisions
- 6 There are Opportunities to Expand Film Collection and Recycling in California
- 11 Why Recycle Plastics?

Why are our California Plastic Policies Not Working?

- 17 AB 939: Recycling and Landfill Legislation
- 19 The Continuing Debate Over All Bottle Plastics Curbside Recycling in California
- 20 SB 235: Rigid Plastic Packaging Container Legislation
- 23 SB 951: Plastics Trash Bag Legislation
- 25 AB 2020: Beverage Container Recycling Legislation

What Should the State Do About Plastics?

- 33 Plastic Policy Goals and Objectives
- 37 Considerations for Promoting Plastics Source Reduction
- 38 Should Certain Plastic Products or Packaging Be Banned?
- 44 Plastic Markets Need to Be Encouraged
- 48 Should Landfill Tipping Fees Be Increased in the State?
- 49 Should Plastic Manufacturers Be Assessed Additional Plastic Payments?
- 51 A Suggested California International Symposium for Plastics
- 51 There is an Opportunity for Industry to Help Initiate Plastic Solutions
- 52 Special Acknowledgements
- 52 The 1960's Bit of Advice Proved Visionary



